

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
27 JANUARY 1976

Congress criticized on leaks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congress' ability to obtain and keep secrets was attacked by the Ford Administration and by some congressmen yesterday as details of the final report by the House Select Committee on Intelligence became public.

The report says that U. S. intelligence costs about \$10 billion a year and that some covert operations sometimes have been ordered by presidents and their staffs despite CIA and State Department opposition.

It says Richard M. Nixon, for example, directed the CIA to support Kurdish rebels in Iraq despite the objections from the CIA, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and the State Department.

The House committee set to work yesterday on proposed recommendations, including one to abolish a major Pentagon intelligence agency and another to create a permanent House intelligence committee.

CIA Director William E. Colby, at a news conference, criticized public disclosure of secret operations in connection with release of the House report.

Without criticizing Congress, FBI Director Clarence Kelley told a Senate committee that increased congressional supervision could jeopardize his agency's investigative ability.

"The establishment of unlimited access (of congressmen to FBI secrets) could seriously jeopardize the flow of volunteer information, which is the life blood of our investigative organization," Kelley said.

At the White House, Press Secretary Ron Nessen said President Ford had not seen the final House committee, and Nessen declined to comment on it.

He said the preliminary draft of the committee's report had been released prematurely, raising "serious questions about how classified material can be handled by Congress when the national security is at stake."

The bluntest attack came from Rep. Robert McClory of Illinois, senior Republican on the committee, as members took up a proposed recommendation to create a permanent House committee to oversee secret intelligence operations.

"I must confess that at this point, I am not confident a House committee could be trusted with this information," McClory said.

Staff Director A. Searle Field told the committee that it was possible that some administration official had leaked secrets in an effort to make it appear that Congress should not be trusted in the future with such information.

The proposed recommendation for creating a permanent House committee also proposes severe sanctions even against congressmen for leaking secret information.

It proposes steps for removing congressmen for the intelligence committee and moving to censure them for releasing such information.

At the same time, the permanent House intelligence committee would be empowered to determine on its own that secret information should be released to the public.

If a congressman tried to disclose a secret operation that he considered improper and the intelligence committee refused, he would have the right to petition for a secret session of the full 435-member House to consider his request.

Another proposed recommendation would abolish the Defense Intelligence Agency and divide its operations, including the worldwide network of military attaches, between the CIA and the secretary of Defense's office.

The National Security Agency would be separated from the military agencies under another proposed recommendation. It would become a civilian agency with instructions to

gather primarily diplomatic and economic rather than military intelligence.

There is no proposed recommendation to abolish all U. S. covert operations abroad as some members have suggested — but there is one to require that the entire National Security Council approve such operations.

That recommendation stems from what committee sources say is a theme through the report that presidents and aides, specifically Nixon and Kissinger according to the report, have pressed for ratifications despite objections from agencies.